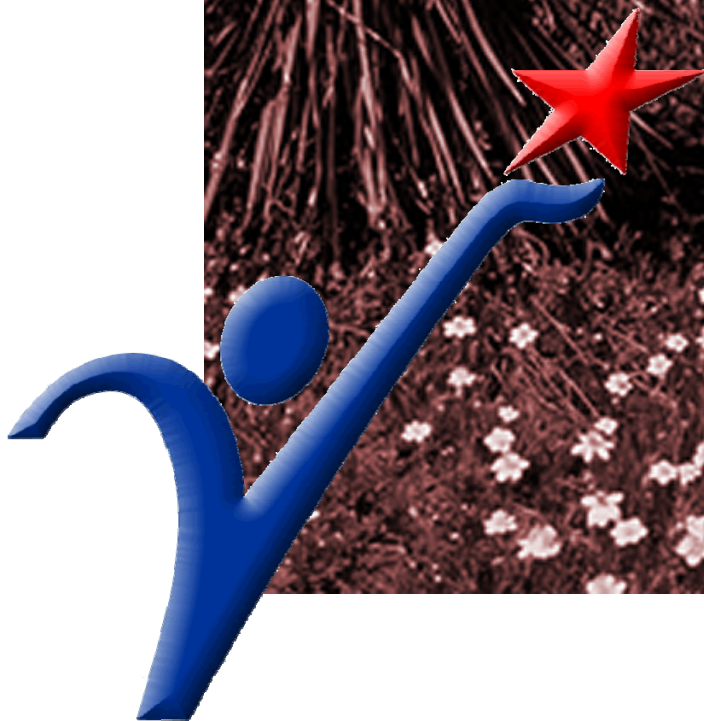


DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

VOLUNTARY SERVICE

NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

59TH ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES



MAY 25 – 28, 2005
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA

**59th ANNUAL MEETING REPORT
VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

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THE VAVS NATIONAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

PREFACE

The Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) was established by VA Circular No. 117, May 17, 1946, and became a Federally chartered advisory committee on February 5, 1975. The Committee advises the Under Secretary for Health on matters pertaining to the participation of volunteers in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facilities. Committee membership is open to all national organizations that provide volunteers or donations to VA medical facilities and meet or exceed minimum criteria established by the NAC. Current membership categories and criteria for the NAC are:

1. Service Member (voting) -- maintains the provision of volunteers and VA recognized participation on local VAVS committees at a minimum of thirty VA facilities;
2. Associate Service Member -- maintains the same requirements as Service Members, but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities;
3. Donor Member -- donates significant funds or materials to assist or benefit veterans at a minimum of thirty VA facilities; and
4. Associate Donor Member -- maintains the same requirements as Donor Members but at a minimum of fifteen VA facilities.

The Chairperson of the NAC is the Chief Communications Officer, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Deputy Chairperson is the Director, Voluntary Service Office, VHA. Each member organization may appoint one National Representative and up to eight Deputy Representatives to serve on the NAC. A member organization may also certify individuals to represent it on local VA facility VAVS Committees where its members actively volunteer.

The NAC meets annually in the spring and its members attend at their personal or their organization's expense. The Executive Committee (EC) of the NAC meets during the VAVS Annual NAC and again in the fall. NAC meetings are open to the public. Advance notice of the purpose, date, time, and location of each NAC and EC meeting is published in the Federal Register.

Service Member Organizations

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

<u>Service Member</u>	<u>Present/Absent</u>	
American Ex-Prisoners of War, Inc.	P	
American Gold Star Mothers, Inc.	P	
The American Legion	P	
American Legion Auxiliary	P	
American Red Cross	P	
AMVETS	P	
AMVETS Auxiliary	P	
American War Mothers	A	
Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the U.S.A.	P	
Blinded Veterans Association	A	
Catholic War Veterans	A	
Catholic War Veterans Ladies Auxiliary	P	
Disabled American Veterans	P	
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary	P	
Fleet Reserve Association	P	
The Forty and Eight	P	
Help Hospitalized Veterans	P	
Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A. Inc.	P	
National Ladies Auxiliary, Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
Korean War Veterans Association	P	
Knights of Columbus	P	
Marine Corps League	P	
Marine Corps League Auxiliary	P	
The Masonic Service Association of North America		A
Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Cootie of the U.S.	P	
Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
National Society Colonial Dames XVII Century		A
National Society Daughters of the American Revolution	P	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	P	
Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary, Polish Legion of American Veterans, U.S.A.	P	
The Salvation Army	P	
The Sons of the American Legion		A
United Voluntary Services	P	
Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.	P	
Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.	P	
WAVES National	P	
Women's Army Corps Veterans Association		A

Service Member Organizations

(P indicates present and A indicates absent)

Associate Service Member Organizations

Present/Absent

Air Force Sergeants Association		A
American Association of Retired Persons	P	
Blue Star Mothers of America, Inc.		A
Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War	P	
Gold Star Wives of America, Inc.	P	
Honor Society Women Legionnaires		A
I.B.P.O. Elks of the World, Inc.	P	
Italian American War Veterans of the U.S.	P	
Ladies Auxiliary to the Fleet Reserve Association		A
Ladies Auxiliary, Italian American War Veterans of the U.S.	P	
Moose International		A
National Ladies Auxiliary, Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc.	P	
The National Society of the Sons of the American Revolution		A
The National Women's Relief Corps, Auxiliary to the Grand Army of the Republic	P	
Sons of AMVETS	P	
Supreme Cootiette Club of the U.S.		A
United Daughters of the Confederacy		A
U.S. Submarine Veterans of World War II		A
Women Marines Association		A

Donor Member Organizations

Bowlers Victory League		A
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project		A

Honorary Member Organizations

B'NAI B'rith		A
JWB/Women's Organizations' Services		A
National Auxiliary, United Spanish War Veterans		A
National Service Star Legion		A
Veterans of World War I of the U.S.A., Inc.		A

VAVS NAC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Wednesday, May 25, 2005 - 8:00 to 12:00 p.m.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order by Executive Committee Vice-Chairperson Harley Thomas, Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Roll Call: EC Committee 2004-2005

Present /Absent (A/P)

One Year Appointment (Ending December 31, 2004):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ○ The American Legion - <i>Mark Regan</i> | P |
| ○ The American Legion Auxiliary - <i>Marion Schwerman</i> | P |
| ○ Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks - <i>Michael Manning</i> | P |
| ○ Disabled American Veterans - <i>Ed Hartman</i> | P |
| ○ Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary - <i>Teresa Herrie</i> | P |
| ○ Military Order of the Cootie - <i>Francis "Arch" Ethan</i> | P |
| ○ National Society of Daughters of the American Revolution – <i>Barbara Latham</i> | P |
| ○ The Salvation Army - <i>Lt. Col. Gillian Bosh</i> | P |
| ○ Veterans of Foreign Wars - <i>Fred Burns</i> | P |
| ○ Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars - <i>Rosetta Quartarone</i> | P |

Serving Second Year of a Two-Year Term (Ending December 31, 2004):

- | | |
|---|---|
| ○ Vietnam Veterans of America - <i>Judith McCombs</i> | P |
| ○ Sons of AMVETS - <i>William Colley</i> | P |
| ○ Forty and Eight - <i>David Rabius</i> | P |
| ○ Blinded Veterans - <i>George Brummell</i> | A |

Two-Year Appointment (Ending December 31, 2005):

- | | |
|--|---|
| ○ Knights of Columbus - <i>Nestor Barber</i> | P |
| ○ Help Hospitalized Veterans - <i>Mike Lynch</i> | P |
| ○ Paralyzed Veterans of America - <i>Harley Thomas</i> | P |
| ○ Military Order of the Purple Heart - <i>Del "Bulldog" Turner</i> | P |
| ○ AMVETS - <i>John P. Brown, III</i> | P |

VA Voluntary Service Staff Present

- Ev Chasen, Chief Communications Officer, VA Central Office
- Laura Balun, Acting Director, VA Central Office
- Sabrina Clark, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA Central Office

- Marty Naugher, Voluntary Service Specialist, VA Central Office
- Steve Moynihan, Chief, Voluntary Service, Minneapolis VAMC
- Michael Achey, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Phoenix VAMC
- Sheila Beran-Parker, Voluntary Service Specialist, Phoenix VAMC

Goals and Objectives: Executive Committee Vice-Chair Harley Thomas read the goals and objectives of the VAVS NAC Executive Committee:

1. Act as the governing body of the VAVS NAC in this interim period between Annual Meetings.
2. Be supportive of the NAC's primary objective of advising VA on how to coordinate and promote volunteer activities within VA facilities and matters relating to volunteerism.
3. Be apprised of programmatic issues pending within Voluntary Service and Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Headquarters since the 2004 Annual Meeting and to hold discussion on any appropriate advisory actions necessary.
4. Plan EC supportive actions to ensure follow-up on issues or business items from the 2004 Annual Meeting.
5. Receive an update from the James H. Parke Memorial Foundation Board President concerning the Youth Scholarship Program.
6. Receive an update from VAVS Partners, Inc. concerning the Annual Meeting.
7. Assess the 2004 Annual Meeting, finalize plans for the 2005 Annual Meeting, and address site selection for the 2006 Annual Meeting.
8. Review and assess submitted Recommendations intended for the 2005 Annual Meeting and prepare a report on same for all NAC National Representatives.
9. Receive reports from the: Recommendations Subcommittee, Volunteer of the Year Nomination Subcommittee, Membership Subcommittee, Recruitment Subcommittee and Ad Hoc Committee for SOP Revision Subcommittee.
10. Update the NAC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) as deemed necessary.
11. Discuss, as a group, any area within the VAVS program in need of additional progress.

Additions/Corrections to Fall EC Meeting Minutes: Judith McCombs mentioned that two reports were missing, and that exact statistics were missing from the VHA Update. Adjournment on the first day should be marked as a recess. Comments were made on the Recommendations

report. Arch Ethan moved to accept the minutes as amended and J. P. Brown seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Host's Welcome: Michael Achey, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Phoenix VA Medical Center, thanked Sheila Beran-Parker for her help in setting this meeting up. He warned the committee to drink lots of water due to the heat advisory. Sheila Beran-Parker, Voluntary Service Program Manager, Phoenix VA Medical Center, encouraged everyone to enjoy their stay.

59th Annual Meeting Agenda Overview: Steve Moynihan emphasized Mr. Achey's comments on keeping hydrated and dressing for the hot weather. He encouraged people to dress casually. Registration is down this year – only 274 registered, with 55 field staff. Laura Balun said that last year's attendance was 332. Field staff may be affected by budget restraints. Mr. Moynihan went over the room locations for meetings and workshops and encouraged people to visit the education expo. He also went over the schedule. The Parke Luncheon is at a different time than usual. Laura Balun mentioned that the trip to Old Scottsdale has been cancelled. J. P. Brown reminded everyone about the NEC Critique before Saturday's evening festivities.

VHA Update: presented by Ev Chasen, Chief Communications Officer. There is no permanent replacement yet for the position of Director, Voluntary Service; recommendations have been made and interviews have taken place, but no final announcement has been made as of this date. Jonathan B. Perlin, M.D., Ph.D., MSHA, FACP. is the Under Secretary for Health. One of Dr. Perlin's first decisions was to select Dr. Michael Kussman as Deputy Undersecretary for Health, along with Ms. Laura Miller as Deputy Under Secretary for Health Operations and Management.

Inflation of health costs over the past year have caused the budget for this fiscal year to be very tight. It will also have an effect on the proposed budget for 2006. Three issues being proposed to Congress is considering three issues to offset rising healthcare costs: 1) pharmacy co-pay, 2) state homes, and 3) annual enrollment fee. Quality of care is essential and is the guiding principle of VHA.

Items of interest in the FY 2006 proposed budget: more funding for mental health care, construction, and long-term care; a provision that emergency care in non-VA facilities will be covered for enrolled veterans.

The Office of Seamless Transition is a new addition to the VHA System. Their goal is to work with Department of Defense to make the transition from service-member to veteran effortless. Post-traumatic stress disorder has been spotlighted in the media, but may not be as critical an issue as reports suggest. Fifty new veterans have been hired for peer counseling.

The Secretary has recently proposed disability insurance for service members. VA is seeing a trend of injured veterans bringing their families along to be involved in the recovery process and treatment. VAVS is working to provide support for accompanying family members, such as discount car rentals and accommodations.

The CARES report still has to cover 19 sites. Completion is set for the winter of 2006.

After Mr. Chasen's report, Ed Hartman, Executive Committee Chair, arrived and assumed control of the meeting.

VAVS Update: Laura Balun, Acting Director, Voluntary Service Office, emphasized the need for hydration. On April 16, Jim Delgado, former Director, Voluntary Service Office, received the Silver Helmet award from the AMVETS. Steve Reid retired in October and Rick Gillette joined the staff in January to fill Mr. Reid's vacated position. Sabrina Clark joined the office in November.

Elijah "Robbie" Robinson died in late April. Robbie served with VAVS for about 14 years, with 59 plus years of service in the Federal government. He would have been 82 in May.

2004 Annual Reports will be sent to committee members after the meeting.

Recruitment and retention is still a top priority, especially regarding student volunteers and 20s-40s. The goal is to increase the number of student volunteers to 24,000, and 20-40s to 35,000.

My HealthVet is a priority for VHA. The workshop offered during the meeting will explain more about it and its use. Care coordination is also a priority. Tools are being developed to assist the caregivers of veterans, to include volunteer respite programs. Volunteers may assist in providing respite for caregivers.

More volunteers are being utilized in research areas. Ms. Balun asked the committee to encourage young volunteers interested in the medical/science field to participate in VA research programs.

The Transitional Assistance Program (TAP) helps veterans adjust to civilian life. VAVS is looking to involve more volunteers in this program.

Increasing the number of organizations that provide services to veterans is important. One area of focus has been with faith-based and youth-service organizations.

The VET IT program is a new initiative for military personnel who are on medical hold at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Partnering with Walter Reed, VA Information Technology, and VA Voluntary Service provide volunteer assignments that assist in skill building as well as adapting to the civilian workforce. VA is hoping to take this program nationwide and expand it from the IT area.

VA is providing medical services to active-duty (and discharged) soldiers with multiple traumas. Service to these patients and their family members is very important. Families need to be kept aware of regulations and expectations.

Ralph Wozniak commented on Fisher House and the James Haley House. Mike Lynch asked how these families could be helped financially by scholarships. Ms. Balun reminded him that these are still active-duty soldiers. Del Turner commented on a situation with an active-duty soldier in Ann Arbor, saying that communication is a problem. Harley Thomas mentioned that DoD is keeping people on active-duty status when they should be put into the veterans program. Del Turner then said that the patients in the Reserve program should be kept in mind too, since they will be in need of long-term assistance. Ms. Balun said that donations could be made to the VA specifically to help these active-duty trauma patients and their families.

Subcommittee Reports:

Recommendations Subcommittee: presented by Judith McCombs. Ms. McCombs thanked her committee members, Mike Manning and Rosetta Quartarone. Although the subcommittee did not get the response wanted from other committees regarding recommendations, six recommendations were ultimately developed and are pending action by the NAC. The subcommittee suggests using the time frame of June 15-October 31 for future staff surveys regarding recommendations. For approval:

Recommendation No. 1: When termination of a volunteer is warranted, VHA Handbook 1620.1.4.b (pg. 4) states: “Written notification of termination will be sent to the volunteer, and if affiliated, the VAVS Representative.” It is recommended that if the volunteer to be terminated is the VAVS Representative, written notification of termination must also be sent to the National Certifying Official of the affiliated organization.

J. P. Brown commented that this is being done already. He moved that this recommendation not be approved. Ed Hartman asserted that it is not universally carried out, and should be put in the handbook. Laura Balun said that not every organization has a National Certifying Official, so that wording might need to be altered.

Judith McCombs amended the recommendation so that “National Representative” be added to “National Certifying Official.” The amended recommendation was voted on and ***approved***.

Recommendation No. 2: To attract youth organization and business entities to the VAVS program, it is recommended that VA create a recognition/awards program acknowledging the meaningful contributions of these organizations or groups that, while not eligible for NAC membership, have had a positive impact on the VAVS program.

The recommendation was voted on and ***approved***.

Recommendation No. 3: To ensure the continuation of the VAVS program in perpetuity, and to sustain and expand the VAVS contributions to the fulfillment of VA’s mission, VA has set a priority to target the recruitment of VAVS volunteers in the 20-40 year age group. To capitalize on the computer skills of this target group, it is recommended that a discussion page be added to the VAVS website, so that volunteers can share their experiences, generate ideas, and recruit new volunteers.

The recommendation was voted on and ***approved***.

Recommendation No. 4: To sustain the momentum of new volunteers, and to increase retention, it is recommended that VA urge each facility utilizing VAVS volunteers to issue a thank you letter from the facility director upon completion of the first three months of volunteer activity.

The recommendation was voted on and ***approved***.

Recommendation No. 5: Make a Difference Day is a unique program that inspires and rewards volunteers, and began with a simple idea: put your own cares on hold for one day to care for someone else. Sponsored by *USA Weekend* magazine and its more than 600 carrier newspapers, and in partnership with the Points of Light Foundation, Make a Difference Day is the largest and most encompassing national day of helping others, and is held annually on the fourth Saturday in October (if participation on Saturday is not possible for religious reasons, projects may be done on Sunday). It is therefore recommended that VA encourage local facilities to coordinate annual programs or events (e.g. homeless fairs, stand downs, etc.), in partnership with community organizations on Make a Difference Day. VA's participation in this national event promoting community involvement would raise VA's visibility, enhance VA's mission, strengthen VA's community ties, and promote recruitment of VAVS volunteers.

The recommendation was voted on and ***approved***.

Recommendation No. 6: While mindful of our national security issues, VA's plan to implement a policy regarding background checks of all VAVS volunteers will be detrimental to the VAVS program. VAVS volunteers take seriously the safety and security of veteran patients, and their loyalty, dedication, and commitment to improving the quality of life of the veteran patients is demonstrated daily by the number of volunteers signing in and the hours they generate. Subjecting VAVS volunteers to the intrusive and time-consuming process of background checks will have a negative impact on both the retention of the more than 120,000 regularly scheduled volunteers of record and the recruitment of new volunteers. Just the daunting challenge of completing the required paperwork to initiate the background check will be a deterrent to volunteering. Another concern in these times of budgetary constraints is that the expense of executing background checks will be cost-prohibitive. The consequences of implementing this policy will decimate the VAVS program and hinder VA's ability to fulfill its mission of providing quality service, in a timely manner, to our nation's veterans (many of whom are VAVS volunteers). Therefore, VA is urged to reconsider and reevaluate the policy to require background checks of all VAVS volunteers, and devise a broader plan to meet the needs of the agency and the needs of a viable VAVS program.

Harley Thomas asked Ms. Balun and Mr. Chasen about extent of the background checks. Laura Balun said she is unsure of how comprehensive it will be. The checks are required by The Department of Homeland Security, which requires anyone coming into a federal building to have a background check.

Ralph Wozniak moved to table the recommendation until more information is available. Both Nestor Barber and Del Turner seconded the motion. Mark Regan asked a procedural question. Eight voted in favor of tabling, seven voted against, and there was one abstention. ***The motion carried.***

Mark Regan asked how to check on the status of previously approved recommendations – what actions have been taken regarding the recommendations. Judith McCombs said that this would be worked on.

NAC Volunteers of the Year Subcommittee: Ed Hartman said that the awardees were chosen by a conference call held by the committee. Grace Sharp, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Richmond VA Medical Center, is the female NAC Volunteer of the Year. Chester Olszewski, AMVETS, Hines VA Medical Center, is the male NAC Volunteer of the Year. Jennifer Kelly, his granddaughter, is the Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship recipient.

Mark Regan asked if letters were sent out announcing the winners, and was told no. He suggested that there might be a notification process to let nominees know of the winners beforehand. Judith McCombs said that the SOP requires a letter to be sent to the organizations by the committee chair. Ed Hartman said that in the future they would do better in notifying organizations.

Mark Regan asked about the number of nominations and the time between due dates for nominations and the conference call.

Judith McCombs moved to accept the report of the subcommittee and Arch Ethan seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Membership Subcommittee: presented by J. P. Brown. Mr. Brown commented that the committee hoped to include youth organizations under the umbrella of other member organizations. He mentioned 4-H and the National Honor Society and the great work being done by both organizations. A conference call will take place soon in which criteria for inclusion of youth organizations will be discussed.

Mark Regan brought up the idea of a mentoring program within the NAC for new organizations. Judith McCombs said that this would be a great idea, since there is no new member orientation anymore. Del Turner mentioned the work that has been done to get the United Auto Workers involved.

J. P. Brown moved for acceptance of the report and Fred Burns seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Recruitment Subcommittee: presented by Mark Regan. The focus will continue to be on the 20-40 age range. The national representatives will continue to work with the local VAVS to help give direction.

David Rabius moved to accept the report and Ralph Wozniak seconded. ***The motion carried.***

Parke Board Update: presented by Fred Burns. \$15,000 will be given to the first-place winner this year. He thanked everyone who helped select the winner. Only 31 applications were received this year.

Laura Balun mentioned that the applications received this year would be passed on to the Points of Light Foundation for their Daily Points of Light Award. Mr. Burns reminded everyone that three positions would be open on the Parke Board, to be voted on after the luncheon.

Mike Manning presented the financial portion of the report. Currently there is \$571,184.99 in the US Bank Trust account. \$519,877.15 of that is the principle fund, \$27,000 of unpaid scholarships, and \$24,307.84 of accrued interest (for next year's scholarship). Hopefully there will be two \$15,000 scholarships next year. NAC members and organizations have been very generous with donations.

J. P. Brown moved to accept the report and Arch Ethan seconded. ***The motion carried.***

NAC SOP Revisions: presented by Judith McCombs. She outlined the history of the SOP and proposed some revisions. The first recommended revision changes the membership categories to what was proposed by the Voluntary Service Office. The changes have been completed by the Voluntary Service office, but need to be affirmed by the EC. ***The recommendation was approved.***

The second recommended revision is to page two of the SOP, paragraph 3, line 1. "Eight deputy" will be changed to "two Deputy National. . ." and after "Representatives", a new sentence will be added: "Additional deputies, up to a total of eight, may be appointed when the need is justified and approved by the Director, Voluntary Service Office." Del Turner asked when this would take effect. Ms. McCombs said it would be from this point forward. ***The recommendation was approved.***

The third recommended revision is to the language in the Membership Subcommittee section: page 1, last line, paragraph 4, delete ". . . to the EC."; paragraph 5, delete lines 1-3, and "for review and action" at the beginning of line 4; paragraph 6, delete lines 1 and 2, through "and to verify" at beginning of line 3; replace with "Voluntary Service Office will notify the Subcommittee of any organization nearing membership eligibility, as well as verification. . ."; page 2, paragraph 2, at end of line 3, delete "At the"; delete lines 4-6. There are other corrections to be made to misspellings, typos, miss-capitalizations and such type of errors in the document.

Mark Regan asked if things were being moved out of the membership committee. Ms. McCombs said that the Voluntary Service Office wanted to take some of the tasks out of the hands of volunteers. There was discussion among the committee about the selection of NAC members and the role of the Voluntary Service Office in that. ***The recommendation was approved.***

The VAVS Partners, Inc. Treasurers Report was tabled until the NEC critique.

VAVS NAC Membership Report: presented by Laura Balun. There are four member organizations in danger of being moved off the NAC. Ralph Wozniak talked about the effect changes and consolidations in the VA Medical system are having on volunteers. There was discussion among the committee on this.

National Salute Report: presented by Laura Balun. Montel Williams is the new National Salute Chairperson. There were 155 National Salute reports, 37,000 visitors visited 90,000 veteran patients. 597 media events: 171 TV spots, 277 printed, and 149 radio spots.

Judith McCombs suggested Pam Grier as a future Chairperson for the National Salute.

Unfinished Business:

2006 Annual Meeting Update: presented by Steve Moynihan and Laura Balun. The 2006 meeting will be held in Reno, Nevada on May 3-6. The rates have gone up almost 50% at John Ascuaga's Nugget from the \$55 proposed rate. The rate will be \$94 plus the energy tax, equaling about \$106.69 per night. Mark Regan asked how the number of rooms is booked, and how to figure the drop-off percentages.

Mike Manning asked if there were any special awards planned for the anniversary, as this may be a way to increase attendance. A comment was made that the pricing of the meetings also impacts the attendance.

New Business:

NAC Report: presented by Ed Hartman. He asked everyone to get their organizational reports to him by tomorrow. He encouraged everyone to notify registration if a National President or Commander of an organization is attending.

Fall 2005 EC Meeting: Laura Balun introduced proposed sleeping-room nights and meeting dates for The Nugget in Reno. This item of business was tabled to the NEC Critique.

Appointments:

EC Vice Chairperson: Laura Balun announced Mike Manning as the Vice Chair.

Ev Chasen presented a plaque to Ed Hartman to thank him for his service as Chair. Harley Thomas will take over as Chair at the next meeting.

Ed Hartman said that the Recommendations Subcommittee would remain the same.

Good of the Order: Mike Manning mentioned that Wayne Satler from US Bank would be available for discussion after lunch. Judith McCombs thanked Ed Hartman for his leadership.

Mike Lynch encouraged everyone to attend the Creative Arts show during closing ceremonies. Arch Ethan expressed his and everyone's thoughts for Mr. Hartman's family.

J. P. Brown moved to adjourn the meeting; Teresa Herrle seconded. *The motion carried.*

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 pm.

OPEN FORUM

Wednesday, May 25, 2005 – 3:00 to 4:30 pm

Opening Remarks: Ed Hartman, National Executive Committee Chairman, opened the meeting by discussing the history of the open forum. He noted that the primary goal of this session is for the VAVS family to achieve maximum open communication between the National Representatives, Deputies, the Voluntary Service field and VA Central Office staff.

Overview of 59th Annual Meeting: Ed Hartman reviewed the agenda and associated activities of the Annual Meeting.

Introductions: Laura Balun encouraged everyone to attend the closing celebration on Saturday. Entertainment will be provided by the Creative Arts winners.

The field staff introduced themselves, then all of the National Representatives introduced themselves.

Ms. Balun asked that everyone drink plenty of water to stay hydrated.

Overview of 58th Annual Meeting: Ed Hartman reviewed the agenda and associated activities of the Annual Meeting. Mark Regan, Chairperson of the Recruitment Subcommittee, discussed the Saturday morning table topics breakfast on recruitment and encouraged attendance.

Current Issues/Concerns within VAVS: Laura Balun said that one of the new focuses is seamless transition. There is also a strong need for 20-40 year old volunteers. Ms. Balun repeated Dr. Perlin's request for assistance for polytrauma centers.

Miriam Jaffee made comments on the two-year maximum and co-pay.

A presentation was made on the Haley House in Tampa and other polytrauma centers.

Mr. Hartman and Ms. Balun then took questions and comments from the audience. Discussion topics included: a complaint about a coffee break not included in the minutes from the last meeting, veteran's home hours being put towards VAVS hours, inviting applications for the Parke scholarship, state home memorandum, the Points of Light Foundation's association with VAVS, keeping track of volunteers in state veterans homes, setting up a mentoring program/checklist, tools that should be updated (1620 and 1620.1), background checks of

volunteers, last year's recommendation on storms, the changing of the abbreviation of the Marine Corps League in VSS from MCL to MACL, Annual Joint Reviews, privacy, and quarterly meeting minutes being sent by e-mail.

Ms. Balun said that Mr. Tom Harvey will be the keynote speaker for the opening ceremonies and adjourned the forum.

OPENING CEREMONIES

Wednesday, May 25, 2005 - 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Call to Order: The 59th Annual Meeting of the VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee was called to order by Ed Hartman, Chairman, National Executive Committee.

Presentation of Colors: presented by Headquarters Troop, 9th Memorial Cavalry.

National Anthem: performed by April Manchester, President, American Legion Auxiliary #1 – Phoenix.

Invocation: delivered by Chaplain Michael West, Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center.

Introductions: The attendees seated at the head table were introduced by Ed Hartman: Chaplain West; Paul West, Associate Medical Center Director, Carl T. Hayden VA Medical Center; Everett Chasen, Chief Communications Officer; Thomas Harvey, Acting Assistant Secretary for Public and Intergovernmental Affairs; Mary Manross, Mayor of Scottsdale, Arizona.

The video “The Power of the Dream” was presented and then Mr. Hartman introduced Paul West.

Welcome: Mr. West welcomed everyone and thanked all the volunteers. He encouraged everyone to stay hydrated. He wished everyone good luck.

Opening Remarks: Mr. Hartman introduced Mayor Mary Manross. She said that this event reminds her about what is really important. She comes from a family of military members. Her introduction to the VA was when her grandfather received long-term care from the VA. She thanked everyone for their hard work to help others. She described the great community of Scottsdale and encouraged everyone to come back.

Keynote Address: Ev Chasen introduced Thomas E. Harvey. Mr. Harvey thanked Ev for his introduction. He mentioned the President's desire for a culture of service. He thanked everyone for their donations of time, money and knowledge to VA. VA's Voluntary Service Program is the largest volunteer program in the Federal government. Mr. Harvey commented on the current issues in VA. VA is treating more veterans than ever before. Two new VA medical centers are coming to Las Vegas and Orlando, and relocation of the facility in Denver. There will be

expanded medical centers in Pittsburgh and Cleveland. A new cemetery was completed near Lawton, Oklahoma and six more are in the planning stages.

The increase in volunteers this year was the first in four years. Volunteer recruitment numbers are going up for younger volunteers.

In July, the 75th anniversary celebration for VA will begin. Mr. Harvey thanked VA employees and the representatives again for all that they do.

Ed Hartman reminded everyone of the next day's agenda.

BUSINESS SESSION

Thursday, May 26, 2005 - 8:30 to 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order: The session was called to order by National Executive Committee Vice Chairman Mr. Harley Thomas. He thanked The American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars for last night's reception, and also thanked the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the Ladies Auxiliary to the Veterans of Foreign Wars for the morning's breakfast.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Peggy Hurd, Vice President General, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution.

Roll Call: The purpose of the formal roll call of the National Representatives and Deputy Representatives of the member organizations in attendance ensures VAVS is complying with policy in 1620.1. In that regard, Ed Hartman called the roll for the 2005 Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Service Members, Associate Service Members, Donor Members, Associate Donor Members, and Honorary Members.

Meeting Objectives: The following are the Goals and Objectives for the 59th Annual Meeting of the VAVS National Advisory Committee:

1. Provide the Department of Veteran's Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) National Advisory Committee (NAC) an opportunity to conduct its business in a manner that assures achievement of all responsibilities mandated by its charter.
2. Provide NAC orientation to local and national VAVS Representatives and Deputies.
3. Present to all member organization representatives an overview of current and pending VAVS policies and procedures.
4. Accommodate full and open communications among the member organizations, their representatives and the Voluntary Service Central Office and field staff.

5. Provide the NAC's member organizations with the educational and training programs designed to share information geared towards improving volunteer programs with special emphasis on methods to recruit, retain, motivate and recognize volunteers.
6. Furnish the NAC's member organizations the opportunity to hear from the VA leadership concerning key issues within the Department.
7. Arrange for NAC review of, and action on, its pending recommendations.
8. Honor the national recipient of the James H. Parke Memorial Youth Scholarship Award, Jennifer Kelly, student volunteer at the Edward G. Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Hines, IL.
9. Honor the male and female VAVS NAC Volunteers of the Year: Mr. Chester Olszewski, Edward G. Hines Jr. VA Hospital, Hines, IL; and Ms. Grace Sharp, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, VA.
10. Recognize the VAVS American Spirit Award recipients Donna Charles, Sherry Hughes, Steven Stous and Nicholas Villanueva, Voluntary Service Program Managers from VISN 17. Recognize Marty Martinez, Chief Voluntary Service, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, Las Vegas as recipient of the Voluntary Service Award for Excellence.

VHA Update: Harley Thomas introduced Ev Chasen. Mr. Chasen thanked all the volunteers for helping to make the VA the best healthcare system in the Nation. He thanked Jim Delgado and Laura Balun for their contributions. The official selection for the position of Director, Voluntary Service has not been made, but he assured the audience that they would be pleased with the decision.

Jonathan B. Perlin, Md. Ph.D., MSHA, FACP, is the new Under Secretary for Health. Dr. Michael J. Kussman, M.D., M.S., M.A.C.P., is the new Deputy Under Secretary for Health. Mr. Chasen reiterated the proposed budget items: pharmacy co-pay, annual enrollment fee, priority system for reimbursement of care, increase in mental health budget, new construction under CARES, increase for long-term care programs, and coverage for veterans' emergency care in non-VA hospitals.

360,074 veterans have been separated from service in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF). The VA has served 103,300 of those. 86,000 came to the health facilities and 17,000 to the vet centers.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has affected a little over 11,000 veterans from OIF/OEF. About 15 – 20% of veterans will be affected by PTSD at some time during their lives. 100 OIF/OEF vets are serving as counselors, aiding new vets with readjustment. The Secretary has proposed disability insurance.

Mr. Chasen commented on the involvement of parents in their childrens' care. He then introduced a video from Dr. Perlin. Dr. Perlin discussed the need for volunteers and how they improve the quality of care.

Hospice and Palliative Care: Harley Thomas introduced Dr. Thomas E. Edes, Chief, Home and Community Care. Dr. Edes commented on the end-of-life care for veterans. Access to services and support is important. Quality of care is also essential. Of all the Americans who die this year, over 1/4 of them will be veterans. More veterans will die this year than in all of WWII. The mission of the Home and Community Care office is to honor veterans' preferences for care at the end of life.

Dr. Edes commented on hospice and end-of-life issues for the VA system. Smoothing out aspects of the interface between VA care and Medicare is important. To keep up the quality of care, a Family Satisfaction Survey could be offered to families of recently deceased veterans. The concept is still being worked on, so as not to impose on family members in a time of grief.

Dr. Scott Shreve has recently joined the team to help improve hospice and palliative care. Dr. Shreve is working on a strategy to get more volunteers to help with the possible survey.

VAVS Report: presented by Laura Balun. Ms. Balun thanked everyone for what they do everyday to serve veterans. Recruitment and retention is still a goal for VAVS. At the end of 2004, there were about 133,000 volunteers on the rolls, with at least 92,000 logging in hours.

Increasing corporate donors is still a goal. Ms. Balun thanked everyone who participated in the national survey.

Priorities for 2005: Recruitment and retention, increasing the numbers of student volunteers and 20s-40s age group, develop creative and innovative assignments for training volunteers (MyHealthVet, care coordination, Hospice/Respite care, Research, transitional assistance programs), increase participation of faith-based and community organizations, and develop partnerships with youth-serving organizations.

Ms. Balun commented on the new VET IT program. The goal is to take this program nationwide. She shared some photos of the first volunteer recognition program in VA Central Office.

Voluntary Service Award for Excellence: The Award for Excellence is recognition extended to the Voluntary Service Program Manager who exemplifies professionalism, commitment, and dedication to the service of veterans in his or her management of the Voluntary Service Program. Laura Balun presented the award to Marty Martinez, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Southern Nevada Healthcare System, Las Vegas.

(Applause.)

Mr. Martinez told a story about his early days in Voluntary Service with George Fry and Laura Balun. He expressed his honor at being able to receive the award. He thanked the attendees for all they do to support the veterans. He presented his wife Priscilla and thanked her. He also thanked Ed Rose (deceased), Jim Delgado, Laura Balun, John B. Bridger, the local VAVS committee in Las Vegas, Marie Dunlap, Georgie Carter-Krell, Steve Moynihan, George D. Fry, and all of his fellow VAVS Program Managers.

(Applause.)

American Spirit Award: The first American Spirit Award was presented to the Voluntary Service Program Managers from VISN 17 for their work in student recruitment. The recipients are: Donna Charles, Sherry Hughes, Steven Stous and Nicholas Villanueva.

(Applause.)

Sherry Hughes accepted the award on behalf of the VISN 17 Program Managers and thanked them for their leadership and innovation in recruitment.

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Harley Thomas presented the Female NAC Volunteer of the Year Award to Grace E. Sharp, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center, Richmond, Virginia.

(Applause.)

Harley Thomas presented the Male NAC Volunteer of the Year Award to Chester Olszewski, AMVETS, Edward G. Hines VA Medical Center, Hines, Illinois.

(Applause.)

Mr. Olszewski accepted his award in honor of all the volunteers who work with the VA program.

Harley Thomas thanked the Phoenix Scottish Rite Bodies and the Forty-and-Eight for sponsoring the upcoming break. He asked everyone to attend the workshops at their assigned times. He reminded everyone to stay hydrated.

The business session adjourned at 10:15 am.

BUSINESS SESSION

Friday, May 27, 2005 – 8:30 to 11:30 am

Call to Order: The business session was called to order by National Executive Committee Vice Chairman Harley Thomas. He thanked the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Arizona chapter, and Elks National Veterans Service Commission for their sponsorship of the previous evening's

entertainment. He also thanked the American Legion and the American Legion Auxiliary for the continental breakfast.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Frederick E. Ferguson, Medal of Honor Recipient.

Fisher House: Mr. Thomas introduced Jill Manske, Director, Social Work Service. The Fisher House Foundation is a philanthropic group that builds and donates houses – temporary lodging facilities, primarily for families of hospitalized veterans and active-duty service members. There are 33 Fisher Houses in the United States. The houses are comforting and welcoming environments for the families.

The average Fisher House costs \$1.5 million dollars to build and furnish. The newest one is in Houston, Texas, dedicated in April. In 2002, criteria were developed for Fisher Houses. The current priority for Fisher Houses in the future is for facilities treating OIF/OEF active-duty service-members and veterans (and their families), especially the polytrauma centers.

Ms. Manske illustrated the process for a typical Fisher House, using Houston as an example. All new Fisher Houses will be wheelchair accessible and have elevators. VA will pay nationally for repair of local Fisher Houses.

She commented on Operation Hero Miles, which donates frequent flyer miles to families of veterans. The website for Fisher House is <http://www.fisherhouse.org>. There are many ways for volunteers to help out at Fisher Houses. New Canteen coupon books will be available for families of veterans.

Questions were asked about how veterans receive the frequent flyer miles, the length of a typical stay at Fisher House, and whether there is a charge to stay in Fisher Houses.

Faith-Based Initiatives: Harley Thomas introduced Darin Selnick, Director, Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. These initiatives were created by President George W. Bush in 2001. The VA Center is rather new. The Center is responsible for coordinating the Department's efforts in terms of any obstacles to the participation of faith-based/community organizations and the provision of any social and community-service to veterans.

There are four areas of responsibility: incorporating faith-based/community organizations into existing programs, figuring out any barriers, finding existing programs and possible pilot programs to involve such volunteers, and developing an outreach effort. There is a website: <http://www.va.gov/opa/fbci>.

Questions were asked about grants and programs being funded by organizations.

The Cemetery Memorial Ladies: Harley Thomas introduced Valerie Price, VAVS Representative, DAR Phoenix VAVS Committee. The goal is for the local Memorial Ladies programs to join together and become a national program. The Ladies attend funeral services for veterans. This program has been going on for over 40 years at Arlington cemetery, but is

starting to spread to other cemeteries in the Nation. Ms. Price introduced her Co-Chair, Ann Schmenke, and also Peggy Hurd and Delores Scheppe. She showed a film about the program, read a letter from the mother of a recently deceased veteran, and shared some statistics. She encouraged everyone to get involved.

Harley Thomas thanked the Salvation Army for sponsoring the upcoming break.

(Recess.)

(Whereupon, the business session was resumed.)

Report from Member Organizations: Harley Thomas read reports submitted to him by American Legion Auxiliary, AMVETS, Benevolent and Protective Order of the Elks, Help Hospitalized Veterans, Ladies Auxiliary for the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Military Order of the Cootie, Polish Legion of American Veterans and Ladies Auxiliary, Military Order of the Purple Heart, and the Salvation Army.

Mr. Thomas reviewed the minutes of the October National Executive Committee meeting.

Subcommittees:

Membership: J. P. Brown presented the subcommittee's report. In order to increase the volunteer base and to get more active volunteers, Membership subcommittee recommends that NAC waive the membership requirements for youth organizations and provide a new category of membership, referred to as an adjunct membership. To be an adjunct member, organizations must be sponsored by a NAC member organization that will serve as a mentor during a period of service. Groups this could apply to: Boy Scouts of America, 4-H, National Honor Society, Boys and Girls Clubs, etc.

A comment was made from the audience about including the Girl Scouts.

Recruitment: presented by Mark Regan. The subcommittee is looking at ways to re-energize organizations, and reps and deps. There is a pilot project in VISN 11 to develop recruitment initiatives, especially regarding the 20-40 age group.

Recommendations: presented by Judith McCombs. Last year's recommendations were read and the VA's comments were reported. Ms. McCombs mentioned the lack of recommendations received from organizations. Five recommendations will be voted on Saturday, as the sixth has been tabled. The five recommendations were read. Ms. McCombs encouraged all attendees to send out recommendations for 2006.

Comments were made from the audience on the removal of VAVS reps (rec. 1) and the minimum activity time for three months (rec. 2).

Standard Operating Procedures: presented by Judith McCombs. Revisions to SOP were adopted by the EC yesterday. These new revisions were reported on by Ms. McCombs.

NAC Volunteer of the Year: Harley Thomas presented. Yesterday the female and male awards were given out. Mr. Thomas asked everyone to send in their nominations for next year's awards.

Mr. Thomas thanked the committee chairs for their reports and hard work this year. He gave instructions for the upcoming brown bag lunch sponsored by AMVETS.

The business session was adjourned at 11:00 am.

BUSINESS SESSION

Saturday, May 28, 2004 – 8:30 to 11:30 am

Call to Order: The business session was called to order by National Executive Committee Vice Chairman Harley Thomas. He thanked the Knights of Columbus for sponsoring the morning breakfast.

Pledge of Allegiance: led by Sandy Powelson, VAVS Representative, Ladies Auxiliary to the Military Order of the Purple Heart.

A portion of the previous day's episode of the Montel Williams show was viewed. Mr. Williams' guest for the show was the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Mr. Jim Nicholson. Mr. Williams is also this year's National Chairperson for National Salute to Hospitalized Veterans.

Presentation on Veterans Canteen Service: Harley Thomas introduced James B. Donahoe, Director, Veterans Canteen Service. Mr. Donahoe discussed what the Canteen Service is doing to benefit veterans and keep prices low. A quarter of a million dollars from the profits of the Canteen Service will go toward the national games. \$22,000 was donated through a special promotion for Fisher Houses. \$100,000 in special Canteen books has been donated for the five polytrauma centers.

Mr. Donahoe thanked everyone for all they do to support the care of America's veterans.

Recommendations: The deadline for submissions of recommendations is August 31. Judith McCombs first read the tabled recommendation and then led the vote on the five recommendations.

Recommendation No. 1: When termination of a volunteer is warranted, VHA Handbook 1620.1.4.b (pg. 4) states: "Written notification of termination will be sent to the volunteer, and if affiliated, the VAVS Representative." It is recommended that if the volunteer to be terminated is the VAVS Representative, written notification of termination must also be sent to the National Certifying Official of the affiliated organization.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. The motion was made and seconded from the audience. **The motion carried.**

Recommendation No. 2: To attract youth organization and business entities to the VAVS program, it is recommended that VA create a recognition/awards program acknowledging the meaningful contributions of these organizations or groups that, while not eligible for NAC membership, have had a positive impact on the VAVS program.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. The motion was made, and seconded by Del Turner. **The motion carried.**

Recommendation No. 3: To ensure the continuation of the VAVS program in perpetuity, and to sustain and expand the VAVS contributions to the fulfillment of VA's mission, VA has set a priority to target the recruitment of VAVS volunteers in the 20-40 year age group. To capitalize on the computer skills of this target group, it is recommended that a discussion page be added to the VAVS website, so that volunteers can share their experiences, generate ideas, and recruit new volunteers.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. The motion was made, and seconded by Arch Ethan. **The motion carried.**

Recommendation No. 4: To sustain the momentum of new volunteers, and to increase retention, it is recommended that VA urge each facility utilizing VAVS volunteers to issue a thank you letter from the facility director upon completion of the first three months of volunteer activity.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. The motion was made and seconded from the audience. **The motion carried.**

Recommendation No. 5: Make a Difference Day is a unique program that inspires and rewards volunteers, and began with a simple idea: put your own cares on hold for one day to care for someone else. Sponsored by *USA Weekend* magazine and its more than 600 carrier newspapers, and in partnership with the Points of Light foundation, Make a Difference Day is the largest and most encompassing national day of helping others, and is held annually on the fourth Saturday in October (if participation on Saturday is not possible for religious reasons, projects may be done on Sunday). It is therefore recommended that VA encourage local facilities to coordinate annual programs or events (e.g. homeless fairs, stand downs, etc.), in partnership with community organizations on Make a Difference Day. VA's participation in this national event promoting community involvement would raise VA's visibility, enhance VA's mission, strengthen VA's community ties, and promote recruitment of VAVS volunteers.

The Executive Committee suggests approval. The motion was made, and seconded by J. P. Brown. **The motion carried.**

Ms. McCombs thanked her committee members Mike Manning and Rosetta Quartarone.

Presentation of Next Year's Meeting: presented by John Howard, Voluntary Services Coordinator, Reno VA Medical Center. Mr. Howard presented a video on Reno, Nevada. He gave some information about the local VA center.

Guest Presenter: Stephen Gower, inspirational speaker, led his speech titled "What Will They See When They See You Coming?" This lecture was sponsored by Federated Wholesale. He covered such topics as communication, perception, discipline, management and leadership.

Harley Thomas thanked Mr. Gower.

Closing Remarks: presented by Ev Chasen. The decision on the position of Director, Voluntary Service Office is still unknown. Mr. Chasen said that all of the volunteers give him a sincere feeling of pride and joy, and wished everyone a safe journey home.

Harley Thomas asked everyone to fill out their evaluation forms. He thanked all the attendees, the Executive Committee, and Ed Hartman.

Benediction: provided by Gillian Bosh, National Representative, The Salvation Army.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:08 am.

VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Workshops

Volunteer Recruitment And Retention Is In Jeopardy!

Faculty: Keith Butcher, Chief, Voluntary Service, Brooklyn VA Medical Center
Anna Diehl, Chief, Community Resource Service, White City Rehabilitation Center and Outpatient Clinic
Bonnie Gunter, Chief, Voluntary Service, Hines VA Hospital
Jeff Honeycutt, Chief Community Affairs, Black Hills VA Health Care System

It is important to design volunteer assignments that are attractive to targeted volunteer populations, as well as developing appropriate awards that foster retention. There is no typical volunteer – "one size does not fit all." The workshop presenters acted out a version of the game show "Jeopardy!", then went over the interrelatedness of volunteer assignments and volunteer recruitment. The various assignments were discussed, and the targeted volunteer groups were commented on.

Hospice Care – A Celebration Of Life

Faculty: Sharon Croteau, CAVS, Chief, Voluntary Service, Dayton VAMC
Kathleen Hayes, Hospice and Palliative Care Unit Coordinator, Dayton VAMC

The goal of this workshop is for attendees to have the knowledge to: be able to identify the role of the volunteer in a Hospice and Palliative Care program, understand the difference between Hospice and Palliative care (as well as the relationship between the two), understand and relate the team approach to Hospice and Palliative Care from the physician to the housekeeper, and conduct special events on a Hospice Unit (Quality of Life parties, Thanksgiving dinner, weddings/anniversary dinners, etc.).

At the center of hospice and palliative care is the belief that each of us has the right to die pain-free and with dignity, and that our families will receive the necessary support to allow us to do so. Hospice focuses on caring for those near the end-of-life, and palliative care extends the idea of hospice to those suffering in earlier stages of illness or disease. Ideally, palliative care will transition to hospice care as the illness progresses.

The history of hospice care was covered, as well as the different types of suffering that hospice patients may be going through (besides the physical pain).

MyHealthVet

Faculty: James Magiera, MyHealthVet Point of Contact and Staff Horticulturalist, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, Massachusetts
Jim Cate, Activities Assistant, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford, Massachusetts

This workshop led attendees through the MyHealthVet website, demonstrating its uses and answering any questions attendees might have about the site. This website was created for veterans, their families and VA employees to use. These individuals can access health information, tools and services anywhere Internet access is available. The site can be accessed at <http://www.myhealth.va.gov>.

The Family Support in Seamless Transition

Faculty: William Ball, Chief, Voluntary Service, VA Palo Alto Healthcare System

The goal of this workshop is to ensure that every seriously injured or ill serviceman and woman returning from combat receives priority consideration and world-class service. This workshop covered the Military Treatment Facility, and how it is a sheltered environment. It discussed the common family needs, such as transportation, lodging and meals. Polytrauma centers (and their locations) were defined.



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